

Constitutional Convention.

The State Journal of the 30th December contains an article on the subject of a constitutional convention, to some of the positions of which, we desire to record our objections. We quote one of them:

"We hold that where a people have adopted a constitution containing a provision for its own amendment, it must be amended in accordance with the mode thus prescribed. Where no mode is provided by the constitution itself, for its amendment, it must be accomplished by legislative enactment. To contend that the people have a right to alter or abolish a constitution 'without law and against law,' is the advocacy of revolution itself; a doctrine destructive of all the safeguards of popular constitutional liberty."

Well, this is talking plainly, and is the kind of language which we like to see those who hold the opinions of the Journal and its party. Let us apply the test to this strongly expressed opinion, and see whether it accords with the principles of republican government as recognized by the American people.

What is a "revolution"? Is it not the overturning of the principles of an existing government? the putting an end to its existence? The measures of a government are constantly changing, yet it is not revolutionized. Its officers may be deposed and others appointed, still there is no revolution. The truth is that all governments recognize and presuppose, a legitimate, competent sovereignty; and so long as the supremacy of that sovereignty continues, so long there is not and cannot be, a revolution. In all monarchies and oligarchies, this sovereignty is understood to be lodged in the person of the monarch, or the nobility, as the case may be; and of consequence, if these be deposed, the act of deposition is revolution; because the sovereignty is ended, or subverted. In this country the case is varied, inasmuch as the seat of sovereignty is changed. The Declaration of Independence declares that all political sovereignty resides with the people. The declarations of rights of the different States of the Union declare the same fact.

This right by common consent, unless abridged by special provisions, is held for exercise by free white males of adult age, who are citizens of the country. The provision of our constitution and of others defining the exercise of political power by the people, is simply declaratory, and as such belongs and pertains to the declaration of rights.

Thus then, we have the sovereignty of our government defined; and so long as that sovereignty continues in the exercise of its legitimate functions, so long there can be no revolution. The people, for the sake of convenience alone, delegate to a small number of agents the exercise of political power on their behalf, and to avoid the necessity of too frequent powers of attorney, and to avoid misunderstanding, they give a general power of attorney to their agents, only in virtue of which those agents have any right to exercise political power as officers of the government. This power of attorney we call a constitution. Now it will not be denied that the creator is always greater than the creature. The people create the constitution, therefore they are greater than the constitution; and here the further rule of necessity applies, namely: that the power which delegates authority can at any and all times annul it. It therefore follows of necessity, that the people have a perfect right to annul their constitution at any and all times; and of course they have the right to adopt another in its place, by virtue of their inherent sovereignty. The people are the government, and it is therefore abrogate a constitution without substituting another in its place, the power of legislation "incapable of annihilation," would but return to them for its exercise, and all the proper attributes of government would still remain in being and fully capable of exercise; the only drawback upon that exercise being the single fact of inconvenience. This then would be no revolution, nor would anything be so which leaves unimpaired the sovereignty and principles of our government.

Sec. 2 of Art. 1 of the constitution of Indiana, is a simple declaration of rights. It does not give being to those rights, but declares their existence anterior to and independent of the constitution. If the constitution had not asserted these rights, they would have existed none the less. But as long as they are asserted and thus endorsed by the constitution, the Journal cannot object to their authority. Let us see if the constitution does not assert that the people have the right to do what the Journal calls an act of "revolution." The section referred to declares, "That all power is inherent in the people; and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their peace, safety and happiness. For the advancement of these ends, they have AT ALL TIMES an unalienable and indefeasible right to alter or reform their government in such manner as they may think proper." Not only does the constitution declare the right of the people to alter or reform their government at all times, but so careful is it to provide for the frequent exercise of this right, that it enjoins upon its officers the duty of opening a poll for that especial purpose, once in twelve years. And now forsooth the Journal would have us believe that because the constitutional officers are compelled to offer the opportunity once in twelve years, as a matter of convenience only, that the people have not the right to take the opportunity when they please; although the constitution declares they have the right to do it at all times.

The fact then is simply this: that by virtue of this sovereign right, the people by their chosen representatives provided last winter that a vote should be taken to decide whether a convention should be called to revise the present constitution. A majority of the people by their silence said they did not care. Of those who had a choice, a majority decided that they were in favor of a convention. The calling of a convention in itself considered, is neither tantamount to an act of original sovereignty, nor is it even beyond the power of the legislature. By its vote of last August, the legislature have permission to provide for a convention, but are not compelled to do so. It is with them a question of expediency, with permission to act if they see fit. The vote of last August gives the legislature authority to make provision for a convention and that is all. The convention may agree upon a constitution, but the constitution will be of no validity whatever, unless afterwards adopted by the people. If a majority of the people should adopt it, it then becomes the supreme organic law for the time being, and completely supersedes the constitution whose place it takes; and the effect would be the same, whether the constitution so adopted were recommended by a convention or by a single individual. Any person has a perfect right to draw up a constitution, and ask the people of the State to assemble on a given day and adopt it; and if a majority of them agree to adopt it, by the act of adoption it becomes the law paramount; or, the article of the constitution quoted above is a dead letter.

Again, the Journal argues that the framers of the constitution did not intend that a convention should be called at any other time than that mentioned. Well, suppose they did not, though the Journal falls far short of proving its assertion; still, if the right of the people exists as stated in the 2d section, it matters not what the framers of the constitution intended. If they intended to take away a right which, as they themselves declared, was in existence anterior to their constitution, an "unalienable and indefeasible right," they intended to perpetrate a gross act of usurpation; and their intention or any act in furtherance of it was a nullity.

But the Journal says, it is inexpedient to alter the Constitution. Ah, well! that is the question, neighbor, upon which the people are quite competent to decide. We are willing they should decide it. You have some feeling on the subject, no doubt. The new Constitution might come into operation before the expiration of the official terms of some of your friends; and then, biennial sessions of the Legislature might not agree with your plans entirely. Well, if the people of Indiana come to understand that it might discommodate you and your "three friends," they will doubtless forego their own welfare, for your accommodation.

The State Debt.

The present is a most interesting crisis in the affairs of the State. A measure, upon the proper adjustment of which depends the financial prosperity of Indiana for generations to come, hangs upon the deliberations of the present Legislature. The attention of the people of the State is anxiously directed to the legislative proceedings now in progress, in the hope that they will result in such action as will effectually vindicate our State honor, and afford a guaranty of the liquidation and eventual payment of the public debt, without in the mean time crushing the energies of our people under too heavy a load of taxation. It is already demonstrated, that the arrangement now in progress contemplates no greater burden of taxation than the people are able to bear; and the burden imposed will be borne with cheerfulness, if the imposition of it is permitted to accomplish its proper object, the satisfaction of the just claims of our creditors.

The prospect of the result so much desired seems now to be presented. The proposals of our bondholders are of such a nature as to give promise of a satisfactory adjustment of our debt.

That honest differences of opinion will arise as to some of the terms of the arrangement, is to be expected. It would be strange indeed if such should not be the case; but we hope that members of the Legislature will address themselves to the subject under a full sense of the responsibility involved, and with a desire to accomplish the best possible result; and with such a disposition, we feel confident that success will crown their efforts.

The proposal to divide a debt of this kind, and to charge one half of it upon a public work, taking it as a specific security for so large an amount, running the risk of its producing that amount, and releasing the faith and obligation of the State forever to that extent, is a perfect novelty in stock transactions; and we venture to say, that such an offer was never before made to a State. Add to this that our creditors offer to advance the funds necessary to ensure the completion of the work, and the offer is certainly without precedent. It is the only practicable basis on which our debt can be arranged, and so long as this basis is preserved, there should be no insuperable obstacle found in the details of the business. These are in substance the views we expressed two years ago, and before our creditors made their offers; and we have seen nothing since, that does not tend to confirm us in them.

In the Senate, on Wednesday, a test vote was taken on the bill for the relief of the Wabash College, on a motion made to recommend with instructions. The vote on the question of recommending was yeas 45. This was so decisive, that the bill passed to its third reading without a division. It is understood that the present bill obviates the objection made to that of last session, that it would impair the contingent school fund, and that it now affords a better security to that fund than the property mortgaged to the State afforded. In addition to this, by the present bill the college offers a free scholarship, for five years, to one person from each county in the State, to be educated for a common school teacher. This would have the effect to elevate the standard of qualifications of teachers, and must be, if appreciated, of incalculable benefit to the common schools of the State.

The vote in the Senate, confirming the appointment of SAMUEL E. PERKINS as one of the Judges of the Supreme Court, was as follows:
AYES—Messrs. Allison, Barbour, Beard, Berry of Franklin, Berry of Monroe, Coats, Conner, Cappy, Day, Edmonson, Ellis, English, Green, Hamner, Handy, Hardin, Henry, Howell, Jackson, Logan, Marsh, Miller, Milligan, Milliken, Parks, Reid, Rockhill, Stewart, Stockwell, Taber, Verbrake, Waters, and Zeno—33.
NAYS—Messrs. Bowers, Bradbury, Chenoweth, Clements, Coffin, Davis, Goodnow, Hamrick, Holloway, Morgan, Montgomery, Murphy, Orth, Osborn, Robinson, Simpson, and Winchell—17.

We venture to say that no man who voted in the affirmative will ever have cause to regret it. Mr. Perkins will make one of the best judges which the Supreme Court has ever had.

In a letter written by the Editor of the Vincennes Sun, and dated from Indianapolis, we find the following allusion to an incident said to have occurred here a short time since:
"A short time after Mr. Biddle was elected Judge, R. A. Lockwood, Esq., of Lafayette, had the presumption to strike him in the face. Mr. B. then drew a pair of fangs and made at Mr. L., whereupon Mr. L. drew a spear from a cane, and it is said that he would have killed Mr. B. but for the interference of friends. The cause of the difference is said to be as follows: Mr. Lockwood filed an affidavit before the Supreme Court in a certain case which Mr. B. pronounced false in every particular; afterwards Mr. L. substantiated its correctness by a witness, and then, after the adjournment of court, Mr. L. commenced the attack."

CLERICAL OFFICE-SEEKERS.—The Washington correspondent of the Ohio Statesman says that there were no less than twenty-seven competitors for the office of Chaplain to the U. S. House of Representatives. This race for the chaplaincy always affords a deal of fun in Washington; for the candidates, sometimes in person, and at other times by and through their respective friends, get to abusing each other with as much earnestness, as though all hands, being engaged in electing a ward constable (rather than a chaplain) were "pretty well in it." So the world wars even in black gowns.

RETROCESSION OF ALEXANDRIA.—A petition of sundry inhabitants in the vicinity of Alexandria has gone forward to the Legislature of Virginia, praying that body not to take any steps in relation to the retrocession of that town and county to the Old Dominion, until the constitutionality of the measure shall be tested by the Supreme Court of the United States, before which tribunal the petitioners promise to bring the subject on an early day. They take the ground that Congress has not the power to retrocede a part of the territory of Columbia to its original possessor, though it may give back the whole to the States whence it was taken.

The elements seemed to sympathize deeply in the death of the old year, and to dissolve in tears.—The rain poured down in a flood during the whole day and night of the 31st. We have rarely seen as much in the same space of time. Several buildings have been more or less damaged in consequence.

We yesterday received through Mr. Edwards of the House, a note enclosing an invitation to attend a ball at Terre Haute on New Year's night. As Mr. E. observed, it was not possible to attend, not only for the want of a "water-craft," but for "seven league boots" as well.

Gen. Scott took with him on his voyage towards Mexico, his camp equipage and an India-rubber marquee. He studies his comfort at all events.

Heads of the House.

BY NEMO.

FRANCIS H. FRY, from Montgomery, is a gentleman of estimable character. His amiability and private worth are such, that although no speaker, he has repeatedly been returned to the Legislature, receiving more than the support of his own party at the polls. Mr. Fry is a trader, a business man of practical sense and liberal views. He is not an ambitious man, nor one fond of display; and his selection to the office he holds is therefore a response to his merit, rather than his aspirations.

CYRUS L. DUNHAM, from Washington, is one of the leading characters in the House. He is one of those who never brings to his aid any factitious qualities. As a speaker he has no rhetorical flourish, no tinsel, no posturing; but with his head inclined forward and his eyes intently fixed on his auditory, he gives voice to a steady, cogent, and unbroken flow of argument, which always interests, and seldom fails to convince. Mr. D. is a young man, and with his talents and perseverance he promises to take rank among the first men in the State.

JAMES H. CRAVENS, the member from Ripley, is a gentleman of talent and standing, and of great experience in legislative business. He does not speak too often, and when he does, his address is to the reason of his hearers. He reasons with soundness and point, always keeping his premises clearly in view, going straight on to his conclusions, with at the same time a vigilant eye to the collateral bearings of his subject. Mr. C. was the favorite of many members for the Speakership, and if elected would have made a fine presiding officer. He is patient in investigation, and accessible to persuasion at all times. Usually he does not commit himself upon a question until he understands its merits; but once enlisted, he pushes his object with unremitting perseverance.

CHARLES L. BATELL, the member from Vanderburg, is one of those who find considerable difficulty in becoming familiar with involved subjects. He cannot at a glance seize the strong points of a question, and comprehend all its bearings. This perfect mastery of questions is with him the result of elaborate and patient examination; yet he readily undertakes the task, and when he arrives at his conclusions, he illuminates his subject by the reflections of a mind singularly clear in its ultimate views. He is a sincere votary of truth, and when he elicits it, it never escapes him. His integrity of purpose and well disciplined judgment, have won for him a high degree of consideration among those who know him well. He is remarkable for absent-mindedness, and many anecdotes are given of his curious mistakes of this kind; but as this cannot detract from the worth or usefulness of the man, it is needless to refer to them.

While the resolution for the benefit of soldiers in the army was first under consideration in the U. S. Senate, a short time since, Mr. Benton remarked that the Senate was a deliberative body, and when he first came here the fathers of the republic whom he found here told him that some inconvenience or other had been sure to follow the adoption of any measure passed principally upon an appeal to their feelings of generosity or sympathy, and without the customary forms of inquiry and discussion. "There is a great deal of wisdom in this remark, and it should never be lost sight of. We know that most flagitious measures have sometimes been passed through legislative bodies under the pretence of sympathy for parties affected, but which were designed for the most wicked purposes.

On the same occasion, Mr. Benton said that "No man was more desirous that justice should be done the army than he was, and he wished to take advantage of the present session of its popularity for that purpose." He had often said, and he wished the fact remarked, that the men who fought at Monterey at Palo Alto, and El Resaca, were the same who had contended so long amidst the horrors of the swamps and hammocks of Florida.
"There were times when the bravest could not command success. Mr. Benton then pointed out in a forcible manner the advantage which the navy had over the army in the matter of prize money. The officers and men in the former were entitled to the value of the public property they had captured, and it had often happened in the course of our history, that when a fortress was taken wholly by land forces, the officers and sailors of a squadron or fleet that might be in sight, received the value of it in prize money, though they had not fired a gun. He gave several instances of this as occurring during the last war.

IOWA SENATORS.—We learn by a gentleman direct from Iowa city, that the Legislature had, in Convention, gone into one balloting for the election of a U. S. Senator. The vote stood as follows:
Jonathan McCarty (possum) 29
Wilson (Democrat) 28
Mitchell (Whig) 1

Consequently there was no election, and the Convention adjourned. It is supposed that the Democrats will refuse to ballot further during this session, because of the refusal of certain Whigs representing Democratic districts, to obey instructions to vote for a Democratic candidate for the Senate; and also because they fear that by a union of the Whigs and the "possum Democrats," McCarty might be elected. The last considerations ought alone to be sufficient; for the election of such a person as McCarty would be altogether infamous. We should very much prefer the election of any decent Whig to such a man as McCarty. The right course, however, under the circumstances, is to postpone; and this course will be adopted by the Democrats.

MEXICAN CRUELTY.—In December, 1835, a Mexican officer of the name of Jose Antonio Mexia, landed at Tampico with a body of men under the Mexican flag. His unfortunate associates had been inveigled into accompanying him by false representations as to their destination, and the object of the expedition.—Among them were several foreigners, the larger number of whom were Americans. They fell into the hands of Santa Anna. The foreigners, including eighteen citizens of the United States, were, without trial, ordered for execution, and inhumanly murdered, while the Mexican part of them were not punished. Two Frenchmen accompanied this expedition, and were among the victims; and for this illegal and inhuman murder, France exacted of Mexico such atonement as she thought proper to demand. None has ever been made to the government of the United States, or to the families of these unhappy victims of Mexican perfidy and Mexican cruelty. It is not strange, now that we are making efforts to obtain reparation, that some whig leaders are arraying themselves on the Mexican side, and against their own country.

The Washington correspondent of the Journal of Commerce, says, it is now very certain that the Clay members of the House will oppose the war as decidedly as Mr. Webster has done. Other writers say that Mr. Clay has advised otherwise.

ERASTUS ROOT, who for many years occupied a prominent place among the politicians of New York, died at New York city on Thursday, Dec. 24th, in the 74th year of his age.

COUNTERTREIT.—Three dollar bills on the Bank of Wooster, Ohio, new, letter A, dated Oct. 1, 1846, are in circulation. Plate rough and coarse; signature engraved, and filling up bad.

The value of the prizes taken at Tobacco and Tampico by the squadron amounts to \$320,000.

State Debt.

We give below an outline carefully prepared, which on examination will afford a clear idea of all the important features of the amendments proposed to the State Debt Bill of last session. The amended bill is quite voluminous, its dimensions being swelled by recitals of the previous act, and preamble to the present enactments. For the convenience of those who have not patience to read the bill, and for the reason that it is too lengthy for our columns, we have been at pains to furnish our readers with a statement of its substance.

The synopsis will be found convenient for reference by those who desire to examine the bill critically. We have struck off copies of it on separate slips of paper, which can be had on application at this office. Synopsis of the Bill supplementary to the Act to provide for the Fanded Debt of the State of Indiana, and for the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal to Evansville.

The first seven sections of the bill provide for the division of the debt, principal and interest, as contemplated in the thirty-second section of the act of last winter, and for the issuance of the certificates of stock under that section. There are matters almost purely of detail, for greater certainty, as follows:

The preamble recites former act by its title, &c.; difficulty of raising subscriptions to the amount required by the act; proposal to surrender bonds for \$4,000,000; and to subscribe 20 per cent. thereon; which is considered sufficient to complete the canal.

Section 1. Outstanding bonds to be surrendered, and certificates issued in exchange; form of certificates as in the schedule.

Section 2. Certificates to be issued for arrears of interest.

Section 3. Interest on State certificates from 1847 to 1853, how to be paid.

Section 4. Interest on Canal certificates, how to be paid; deficits to be funded after 1853.

Section 5. Interest on State certificates, to be paid only on certificates registered during the previous half year.

Section 6. Bondholders not subscribing, nor exchanging their bonds until after 1st October, 1847, to have certificate for interest then due, but not money.

Section 7. Surplus of taxation to be applied to redeem treasury notes.

The eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh sections provide for the time and manner of subscription for the completion of the canal, the amount of subscription, and extends the time for the act to take effect till 1st May, 1847.

Section 8. Bonds to be surrendered of not less amount than \$4,000,000; time for surrender of bonds extended to 1st July, 1847. *Proviso*, that time for further surrenders be extended to 1st August, 1847.

Section 9. Notice to be given to bondholders to subscribe and to exchange their bonds.

Section 10. Bondholders to subscribe five per cent. on or before 1st August, 1847, or to be excluded from subscription; but time allowed to subscribers to deposit their bonds until 1st October, 1847; any bondholder may, however, at any time thereafter surrender his bonds and receive certificate therefor.

Section 11. Act to take effect when \$4,000,000 bonds subscribed, and notice thereof given, and payment of five per cent. on such subscription; former act and this act to be at an end if five per cent. be not subscribed and paid before 1st May, 1847.

The twelfth section provides for the distribution of the proceeds of canal lands, and tolls, and revenues of the canal. The general provision is that they be appropriated to the completion of the canal and the payment of interest on the loan or advance, until the canal is completed; and afterwards to the payment of the interest and principal of the debt charged upon the canal. This section takes the place of the eighth section of the previous act. It will be noted that the nineteenth section of the former act, still continued in force, provides that all expenditures connected with the trust, are to be paid out of the trust funds.

Section 12. Eighth section amended as to priorities in payment, as follows:

First. In payment of work, labor, and materials.

Second. In payment of interest at six per cent. per annum on advances, out of tolls.

Third. In payment of principal of advances.

Fourth. In payment to subscribers of interest on their certificates.

Fifth. In payment to subscribers of interest on their special stock, and then of principal thereof.

Sixth. In payment to subscribers of the principal of their certificates.

Seventh. In payment to non-subscribers of the interest on their certificates.

Eighth. In payment to non-subscribers of their special stock and interest.

Ninth. In payment to non-subscribers of the principal of their certificates.

Tenth. To pay balances into the State Treasury.

Saving the just rights of the holders of Wabash and Erie canal bonds; parties interested to be paid *pro rata*, and according to their priorities; holders of six per cent. bonds to be entitled to one-fifth more capital; all bonds at sterling to be exchanged at fifty pence per dollar.

The thirteenth and fourteenth sections provide in what manner the subscribers shall elect their two trustees, how they may be discharged, and how vacancies are to be filled in the board.

Section 13. Subscribers to elect two trustees; mode of first election; by majority in number and value of subscribers; no election to be void by reason of technical informalities; but trustees to take the oath required by the act, and to give bond; certificate of election to be forwarded to the Governor.

Section 14. New trustees to be appointed in case of death, misconduct, &c.; new trustees to have power of former trustees; subscribers to remove their trustees for misconduct, &c., and to appoint new trustees.

The fifteenth and sixteenth sections provide that the subscribers may elect bankers for the trust, and prescribe their duties.

Section 15. Subscribers to appoint bankers; by majority in number and value.

Section 16. Moneys received by trustees to be paid to bankers; all drafts and orders to be signed by trustees; trust funds not to be liable to sequestration, &c.

The seventeenth section, to increase public confidence, provides that the trust is not to be affected by commotions, or other causes, until fully and finally discharged.

Section 17. Stock and property of foreigners to pass according to their laws; to be exempt from fees or charges on account of the death of holders; exempt from attachment, &c.

Section 18. Canal stock and certificates held by the State not to be reissued; particulars thereof to be rendered to the trustees.

The nineteenth section provides for calls on the subscription for the completion of the canal.

Section 19. Notices of calls to be publicly given; how to be published; defaulters to forfeit their advances, priority and all contract in respect thereof.

Section 20. Time is allowed for completion of the canal in case of unavoidable delay.

Section 21 is omitted, and a note inserted to the same effect, viz: that it is desired that as far as practicable the State should furnish the trustees with

map or plan, schedule, and classification of the canal and works and the canal lands.

Section 22. Subscribers to have the power to inspect records of the proceedings of the trustees, the same as State officers; trustees to render half-yearly accounts to the subscribers.

Section 23. Provides that a majority of the trustees may sell lands.

The twenty-fourth section makes certain specific amendments in the original act, which by this act is continued in force.

Section 24. Amendments under the twentieth section of the recited act; to have the same effect as if originally enacted; amendment A to the ninth section, so as to read "execution and delivery of the deed;" B amends section twelve so as to read "and shall assume the payment of principal and interest;" amendment J provides that the State shall fix the salary of the trustee on the part of the State, and the subscribers shall fix the salaries of the trustees appointed by them.

For the other specific amendments, see the section.

The twenty-fifth section authorizes the agent of State to appoint some person or persons in London to receive the surrender of foreign bonds, to save the risk of loss in transmitting them across the ocean, and to receive and transmit the five per cent. advance on subscriptions at the risk of the subscribers; the expense of such exchange, &c. not to exceed \$500.

The twenty-sixth section provides that in the event the \$800,000 to be subscribed shall not be sufficient to ensure the completion of the canal in four years, the trustees may raise, by pledge of the unsold lands, the further sum necessary, not exceeding \$500,000; and further provides that the full time for completing the canal shall not in any case exceed six years.

The twenty-seventh section provides that the trust property shall not be diverted from the purposes of the trust for the general use of the State.

Section 28. This act to be public, and liberally construed; defects may be supplied by future legislation.

Carrier's Address to the Patrons of the Sentinel.

WRITTEN BY MRS. SARAH T. DOLTON.

I stood beneath a wintry sky,
In musing mood alone,
And as the chilling wind went by,
With its low, solemn tone,
I thought I heard, in every pause,
A deep sepulchral groan.

I turned—and lo, an aged form
Was feebly bending there;
The viewless spirit of the storm
Played with his silvery hair;
The frost-gems glittered on his feet
All bloodless, cold, and bare.

His brow was marred by lines of care,
Death's hue was on his cheek;
His trembling limbs could scarcely bear
Their burden worn and weak;
His voice was lost, in hollow groans,
When he assayed to speak.

Aside the sombre clouds were driven
That veiled the brow of night;
The far-off stars, like eyes in heaven,
All solemn, pure, and bright,
Looked coldly on the jewelled earth
That sparkled in their light.

He felt the change—a gleam of mirth
Lit up his glazing eye;
He gazed upon the lovely earth,
Then on the starry sky,
And said, "It is a glorious night,
A blessed time to die."

"Though wearing care and toil have wrought
Deep furrows on my brow,
Though many a weary day has taught
This wasted form to bow,
I was not once the feeble thing
That you behold me now."

"I grasped a sceptre, all my own,
The night my father died,
And sat me down upon my throne
With all a monarch's pride;
I knew my way was glorious,
And my dominion wide."

"I journeyed forth, without a care,
O'er many a land and sea;
My path was in the wilderness air,
My footsteps wild and free;
My heart was full of happy dreams,
My voice was full of glee."

"I saw the beauties of the earth,
The wonders of the sky,
And deemed, with such a place of birth,
'T was strange that men did sigh;
Strange, they did weep, but stranger still,
That they were doomed to die."

"I had not then unveiled the heart,
Or seen the secret springs
From which in quick succession start
Man's wayward wanderings,
Nor did I know the lightning speed
Of thought's unwearied wings."

"I've seen a lappy little band
Of children, in their play,
Fling shining shells upon the strand,
To gather blossoms gay;
Then, if a butterfly came by,
The flowers were thrown away."

"Thus, full of vague imaginings,
The mass of human kind,
Striving to grasp the brightest things,
Leave all the best behind;
No earthly good can fill the soul,
Or satisfy the mind."

"I've seen the lord of wealth and power
Beset with gloom and fear;
The lady, in a palace bower,
Shed many a burning tear—
Men ever find that wealth and fame
Are not what they appear."

"The warmest, lightest hearts I found
Beside the peasant's hearth,
Where day in honest toil went round,
The eve in sinless mirth—
Such beings grace man's heritage,
This beautiful bright earth."

"In every land beneath the sun,
These restless feet have been;
Strange things these shrivelled hands have done,
And wondrous too, I ween;
And many a dark, mysterious sight
These failing eyes have seen."

"I've wrought a change in many a home,
Where hearts were young and gay;
I've stamped upon the proudest dome
The impress of decay,
And helped the little water-fall
To wear the rocks away."

"The forest, river, vale, and hill,
Grey mound, and ivy tower;
The broadest sea, the smallest rill,
The palace, and the bower,
Have felt alike my magic touch,
And owned my wondrous power."

"I sat, one lovely summer night,
Beside a lady fair,
And painted tresses of silvery white
Amidst her raven hair;
She started, in the morning light,
To see Time's way-marks there."
"I stood within a dungeon cell,
And saw the dreadful strife
Of him who numbered long and well
His last few hours of life;
With hope, despair, fear, agony,
Remorse, and anguish rife."
"Within a borel, cold and damp,
A man, in seeming, poor,
Lighted a feeble, flickering lamp,
And doubly barred the door;
Then raised his iron coffer-lids
And gloated o'er his store."

"I stood within that cheerless room,
Beside a tattered bed,
And heard, amidst the mid-night gloom,
A murderer's stealing tread:
I looked upon the miser's form,
'T was pale, and cold, and dead."

"I saw Italia's moonlit seas;
Britannia's lazy sky,
The Ganges, with its devotees,
Himalaya hoar and dove,
And heard, along the Danube's shore,
The perfumed zephyr's sigh."

"I saw Mohammed's worshipped grave;
The city of the Czar;
I saw the crescent banner wave
O'er Palestine afar,
And stood on Waterloo, where fell
Napoleon's guiding star."

"I saw the frozen Arctic main;
The waste, where Arabs roam;
The lovely, dark-eyed maids of Spain;
The Tartar's mountain home,
And sat, in trembling awe, beside
The monuments of Rome."